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# *State of South Carolina*

## *Department of Motor Vehicles*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SCDMV BEGINS ISSUING DIGITAL LICENSE PLATES**

**Blythewood, SC** – The South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV) announced today the issuance of the first digitally produced license plates in South Carolina. The regular “Smiling Faces Beautiful Places” license plate is the first license plate to be produced as a flat, digital plate. While the design remains the same, the numbers and letters on the new plates are not embossed.

“Although the current regular plate is our first digital plate, all of our plates will be produced through a digital process eventually. Our offices will continue to issue the embossed plates until we exhaust the remaining inventory, but some offices will begin issuing the new flat digital plates this week,” said Executive Director Marcia Adams.

Digitally produced plates require less production time and can be ordered electronically on demand. Digital plates can also use larger characters than embossed plates, making it easier for law enforcement to see plate letters and numbers from a distance. To increase security, the new digital plates produced for South Carolina contain a Virtual Security Thread holographic design in the middle of the plate.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) will remain a part of the license plate process. DOC will continue to apply the sheeting and deboss the edges of the plates.

Beginning in October 2007, SCDMV will also begin issuing the following digitally produced plates: personalized plates, permanent trailer plates, amateur radio plates, disabled veteran plates and dealer plates. SCDMV will begin issuing the new “palmetto sunrise” digital plate in July 2008.

South Carolina residents are encouraged to report address changes to SCDMV to ensure proper delivery of plates and documents from the department. For a more information about vehicle licensing requirements and online transactions, visit the SCDMV Web site at [www.scdmvonline.com](http://www.scdmvonline.com).

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## **SCDMV License Plate Facts**

There are currently 3.7 million registered vehicles in South Carolina and the license plates of today are a far cry from those that were first issued by the agency. License plates were not even a consistent size from year to year until the mid 1930's. The largest license plate was issued in 1926 and measured 5 by 16¾ inches. Since 1956, all license plates have been produced at the standard size 6 by 12 inches. During the early production of the license plates, the expiration date was actually imprinted into the plate. It has only been within the past 30 years that expiration stickers have been used on the license plates.

The appearance of the plates has also changed quite a bit over the past 88 years. The plates produced in 1916 and 1917 had the county and town in which the vehicle was registered on the plate. In 1926, the division attempted to create a more decorative plate by including a palmetto tree. In the 1930's, the license plates began to carry slogans such as "The Iodine State" (1932) and "The Iodine Products State" (1933).

The current "Smiling Faces Beautiful Places" license plate went into circulation in 1998. There are currently 2.7 million plates of this type currently registered in South Carolina. SCDMV will begin issuing the newly designed palmetto sunrise plate in July 2008. According to a state law that went into effect in 2002, the department is required to issue a new license plate at least every six years. The new license plates will be issued beginning July 1, 2008.